

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

INITIAL POLLUTION REPORT

I. HEADING

Date: July 31, 1992

From: Nick Magriples/Bob Montgomery

To: W. Muzynski, EPA

R. Salkie, EPA

J. Witkowski, EPA

S. Becker, EPA

J. Marshall, EPA

E. Schaaf, EPA

C. Whitfield, NYSDEC

J. Wuthenow, NYCDEP

J. Sevinsky, NYS Attorney General

ERD, Washington, (E-Mail)

TAT

K. Callahan, EPA

G. Zachos, EPA

V. Pitruzzello, EPA

J. Russo, EPA

W. Mugdan, EPA

C. Goddard, NYSDEC

A. Rockmore, NYSDEC

E. Catenzaro, NYCDEP

Subject: Hexagon Laboratories, Bronx, New York

POLREP NO.: Polrep One (1)

II. BACKGROUND

SITE/SPILL NO.: AD

D.O. NO.: 0026-02-031

RESPONSE AUTHORITY: CERCLA/SARA

NPL STATUS: non-NPL

ACTION MEMORANDUM STATUS: pending

START DATE: 07/29/92

III. SITE INFORMATION

Incident Category

Abandoned Chemical Manufacturing Facility

Site Description

A. Site Description

Hexagon Laboratories is an inactive facility located at 3536 Peartree Avenue in the Eastchester section of Bronx County, New York. It is situated in a densely populated urban area with approximately 381,000 people within a three-mile radius.

Hexagon was a chemical manufacturing firm which produced medicinal chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Hexagon began operation in 1946 and ended in 1988. The company went bankrupt and since then the facility has been "guarded" by a former employee of the company.

B. Description of Threat

The containers and laboratory chemicals stored at the site



pose a significant threat to public health. Due to the types of chemical stored at the site (see below), their age and extreme incompatibilities, the potential for a release is great if the materials are disturbed. There have been reports of access onto the property by vagrants and drug addicts, which poses a threat to their health, and increases the risk to the workers/residents in the area should the containers in the buildings be disturbed. A release or disturbance of the materials could potentially result in a fire/explosion, with the result being a highly toxic plume.

Removal Site Evaluation Results

On July 29, the On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) and the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) conducted a site visit to initiate the assessment of the building's contents. Access was provided by the watchman (a former employee of Hexagon) for the site that is reportedly paid by a former owner. A partial inventory from the NYCDEP, and old lists of chemicals used and wastes generated at the site provided a guide for the types of materials at the site. The initial site entry revealed hundreds of drums and over one thousand laboratory chemicals.

The chemicals are raw materials, chemical intermediates, mother liquors and wastes from the former operation. Based on the inventories and other available information, the chemical hazards include; potentially explosive materials, shock sensitives, water and air reactives, poisonous cylinders, carcinogens, flammables, oxidizers and corrosives. All are stored together haphazardly. Portions of the buildings inside present physical hazards due to no lighting and flooding. Although most of the drums are in what used to be the office building, there are many other containers scattered throughout many small and difficult to access rooms.

As of July 31, an inventory completed by TAT and the OSCs revealed approximately 600 various sized containers (10 to 55-gallon drums and various sized fiber containers), as well as at least 2,500 laboratory chemicals. Of the twenty-seven above and underground tanks, at least one is reported to contain some type of waste material. The tanks were not checked for contents.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

Planned Removal Actions

Due to the potential for a serious release, the OSC requested verbal authorization to initiate an emergency removal action on Wednesday, July 29, 1992 at 1440 hours and subsequently was provided with \$150,000 in contract mitigation funds and a \$250,000 project ceiling. ETI was selected as the Emergency Response Cleanup Contractor (ERCS) contractor.

The purpose of this initial action is to initially stabilize the site to lessen the potential threats that exist. Additional funds will be necessary in the future to remove these threats completely.

Situation

A. Current Situation

See discussion below.

B. Removal Actions to Date

On July 29, at approximately 1700 hours, two security guards hired by ETI arrived at the site for around-the-clock duty to supplement the watchman and dog present at the facility. The additional security guards were necessary due to the type of neighborhood and the repeated entries onto the site by vagrants and drug-addicts.

The ERCS response manager (RM) arrived at the site on Thursday, July 30, 1992 and was requested to provide a chemist on the following day. A small puddle (four inches) of mercury discovered in one of the yards was accumulated, bottled and placed in the building. The area where the spill was found was covered with plastic sheeting.

On Friday, July 31 a chemist arrived to inspect certain containers that posed the concern of being shock sensitive. Although there are a number of these containers in the building, a visual inspection at this time revealed one that appears to be in poor condition. Due to its location amongst other drums, it was decided not to disturb it till further equipment and personnel were available. A daily work order was issued to the RM on July 31 to provide personnel and materials to initiate site prep and stabilization activities on Monday, July 3. Subcontracting for electrical power and other ancillary equipment have been initiated.

C. Enforcement

Through contacts with the Office of Regional Counsel (ORC) on July 30, it was determined that access to the site for further intrusive removal activities, outside of the assessment, was not available. Through activities conducted at the site by the OSCs, and with the assistance of ORC and the civil investigator, the alleged "owner" of the facility was located in the early evening of July 30. Although this person denies ownership, an access agreement was drafted by ORC and the OSC that same evening and was forwarded to the owner's attorney on the morning of Friday, July 31.

TAT visited the County Seat on July 31 to obtain tax maps and a copy of the deed to the property.

Next Steps

As discussed above, further activities to stabilize the site, such as overpacking damaged containers and segregating, will

resume on August 3.

Key Issues

Site access for intrusive removal actions was delayed due to difficulties with identifying and locating the alleged owner of the facility (see above).

V. COST INFORMATION

Estimated costs for the removal action as of July 31 are as follows;

ERCS Contractor	\$	4,000
TAT Contractor *		-
Intramural Direct Costs (Regional)	\$	2,000
Intramural Indirect Costs (HQ)	\$	3,000
TOTAL	\$	9,000
PROJECT CEILING	\$	250,000
PERCENT OF PROJECT FUNDS REMAINING		96%

The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the EPA may include on any claim for cost recovery.

* Note: there have been no TAT charges to date towards the removal action. All activities conducted with TAT have been under removal assessment.

FURTHER
POLREPS
FINAL POLREP _____ FORTHCOMING __X__ SUBMITTED BY Nick Magriples
Nick Magriples, OSC
Technical Support
Section

DATE 7/31/92